

# IX



*a dead spot of light...*

# Introduction

Not much to write about, only that the forthcoming releases of this magazine will have more interviews... and longer reviews. There is this one neatly designed digi-pack that I received some weeks ago and it is an album that has quite a story behind it. As such, it is difficult to write on it ... well ... one of the tasks for this month.

Two interviews appear this time: Count Beetle, a strange band from the USA and with The Infant T(h)ree, an Italian band, whose art was discussed in an earlier issue. Both are unique in their own respect and most certainly outside the common arena.

A lot of reviews can be found in this edition and bit all of them are positive. No, this magazine will not be a 'praise everything over excess because it grants more copies this way thing'... No, this would definite a progression into the wrong direction.

I also want to thank the bands and labels that have sent me free releases so far. Hopefully my humble comment make up for the investments and such ...

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Cheers

Oneyoudontknow (oneyoudontknow at yahoo dot de)

Note:

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# Interview – Count Beetle

**Please introduce yourself a bit.**

Hello...stranger...I am Teddy Horse on behalf of Count Beetle, a sort of obscure act that began in about 1994, in the woods of Arkansas

**A count beetle? A count of what and why a count at all?**

Our deformities became imperial

**Aside from the quite peculiar name, your band seems to be located in the deep underground. Is your music so special that no one wants to hear it or is it rather due to adverse conditions or bad luck?**

Perhaps a combination of the 3 things mentioned....And yes, there seems to be some bad tidings that shadows this path at times, maybe more so than another...As for the music being so special that no one wants to hear it, (\*Flaps hands like bat wings)I would say there are a select few; an esoteric few, that come to Count Beetle for a feel not found elsewhere...this is better than a whole lot of statistical people who don't get it and thus foul the great well springs with their normality

**Do you have any releases out? What about the ominous "Clairaudience" album? Is there any chance to lay hands on it?**

There was an old oath with Fury 76 records that I have tried to honour for as long as I can, that they would release the album...as of now it is unreleased still, which is terrible....the only way you can obtain it is by such of a petition of "knocking"; by rap rapping on my chamber door (see below)...this is the only way now...the only good thing about this is that it creates a deep and magic obscurity and allows the music to remain wild and elusive and forms an occultist mysticism between the listener and the artist

**The cover of said release reminded me on Lovecraft. The dark and abandoned house with this maelstrom above it could have been taken from one of his stories. Or what background does it have?**

Good you mention such a great author and there is a relevance in that this is another artist who never saw the greatness they should have in their time, and this is how I can identify with Lovecraft here...The photograph was obtained through the local library and the file size was, by magic accident, perhaps, 6.66...It is a place near my home; an old school house where some of my family went to school...the lore of the place is that a teacher burned alive there and there were claw marks and hand prints were she tried to escape...I used to visit the place and it had a special ambiance...it was rebuilt and stood for years until a defacer of history and culture re-introduced it to fire....now there is not a trace left of this place...My lady is a photographer and helped me bring the vision I've had for years of this artwork to life...it is something that I can identify with; something which was vanished and was lost....



**In your interviews you emphasize your fancy for analogue techniques and releases. Might it be due to the fact that you have grown up with these and are somehow used to these; instead of being a real advantage there?**

I actually grew up with Floyd, Sabbath, the doors, and Zeppelin...all these bands had mostly all good and great production, so, No; I don't think that is the issue here...I have come to find this the best byway to present our recordings thus far for the material at hand....It also shows our poverty or class in a sense...we have few resources but I have found you can make magic just with little tools, and this atmosphere becomes an instrument of its' own...The advantage you speak of is of no matter as purity in form is preferred over success in a material sense...what we do, then, is rouge

**My opinion is that a vinyl disk for instance is a nice thing to have, but it comes with problems:**

- 1. How to preserve the quality over a longer period of time**
- 2. The discomfort when it comes to listening to certain passages again**

**What would your opinion on these two aspects be?**

Ah, I suppose one would have to be careful and prudent with such a format...the preservation of this against the enemy that is shelf life is a noble pursuit, indeed...

Bwahahaha....discomfort? I must be an old spook who will not go to the light because I still prefer full albums, I suppose...

**If you like these 'old fashioned' outputs, then what about old movies? Do you enjoy watching black/white maybe even silent ones? What about the development of the film industry? Have the visuals not a too graven impact today?**

Yes, I like those things...when forced to work in these mediums one must make use of shadow and light....They could make so much with so little...now they have all these big things they can do in the effects and still lack the necessary components that made the old stuff so good: Imagination...Imagine what they would have done with it back then? I like old horror movies as well as color ones like the Hammer movies ...The Haxan silent film was a classic wouldn't you say? I am also A enthusiast of Dark Shadows and the series Wind in the Willows....One thing I've found recently

that I highly recommend is the Sherlock Holmes series with Jeremy Brett...this was a true artisan....But it seems that in horror, people don't get as scared as they used to in days ago...perhaps they are numb and need to experience it in a book or in nightmares again...what pure formats these could prove when coupled with technology



(Note from the editor: *Personally, I can understand your position and see where you are coming from, because I prefer analogue photography over digital one. It simply has a different touch and when you see the negatives, and then it is something different than those raw files on a chip. Moreover, you often know that an analogue picture has not been manipulated; even though this is also possible, but it needs more effort than in terms of a digital one.*)

**Speaking of manipulation: should music have a natural touch or should electronics be used to add a different tune or atmosphere to it?**

I think it depends on the music in question....electricity and magnetism are certain things that could unlock certain doors, I'll say...I've had an interest in the past with electronics in the form of

dabbling with a.m. radio and EVP related recordings in the early ninties....

**What kind of instruments do you play and what are used for the recordings of your music ... and what live; did concerts take place already?**

We use the mundane format of guitars, vocals and drums with dressings at times with keys, though we are self taught and found a lot of things manually and on our own terms..this spirit is analogue in it's own right....The introduction of the Clairaudience album was done by firing up an old Wurlitzer organ during an electrical storm and allowing it to seep in through an open window....also we take the elements and at times incorporate them into the music, capturing sounds from the field and wood....the magnetic atmosphere of the way we record becomes like an instrument, as well...we have played in our homes for a select few but the nearest venues show no interest and we live deep in the countryside, far from cities...this is an awful barrier

**The music you sent to me (Corn circles; Faux Squirrels; pre night wayfarer session 97) was quite raw and unpolished. Is this how you generally sound or are these merely some demo takes?**

Generally speaking, this is the way Count Beetle is intended to sound...the album was supposed to be mastered, however, in a professional studio by the said label...but who knows if this will even happen now? Faux squirrels was mixed by Griff of Arkazum, and formerly of Cathdral...he truly did what was in my head as far as how I thought it

should have been done, and in an almost telepathic sense...he did the right thing and that's how I would have wanted this done in the end...It seems to me that many demos are where the real magic is...these are not demos, then, I must say...the night sessions is raw and elemental and I prefer that sound for what it is first, and those are actually 2 songs from the said session in one track and was recorded on an old tape deck with one track and with weird voicing from a once collaborator who now makes music called Hellgramite:

**Even though it is difficult to do so, what words or phrases would you use for describing your art?**

The sound of Clairaudience...a music of dark fellows and strangers; outsiders to outsiders....there is an old and elemental value within and a feeling of passion in performance...

**Your texts seem to have a certain ironic undertone, or? Well, at least the track Corn Circles give this impression ... or what I can make out from the music by listening to it.**

This song came out unscripted and was performed for many years before I got it where it needed to go...it took years to fully form the vocals; the characters...the chorus of a lone Hillman, the mock old men of old woman choirs...sometimes one must hoodwink himself to release the un-manifested higher self....it is like a good ritual that unlocks things inside

**What inspires you and where do you take ideas from? Do you have some favourite artists or writers to whose works you like to turn to on a (more or less) general basis?**

I am inspired by old witchcraft and folklore and by paranormal and animal themes and supernatural...I must first state that there are some writers to mention, but they only inspire me inasmuch as they are people I find a kinship in, in that their work is like unto my own...I have been inspired by the tarot and A.E. Waite outright and the general realm of literature...perhaps certain time periods and man's development in a psychological and spiritual sense...and of course, old horror; classic things dealing with darker subjects....Writers I find of favour to my own tastes are authors like Poe, Lovecraft, Blackwood, Machen, Wait, Jack Snow and Gary Gygax...All inspiration comes from my wild rover's mind, which is overgrown...The sound of a hollow log filled with ground bees can provide much inspiration...and I mean this, in that mostly, it comes from life and living

**Can you write some lines on mysticism? What is your opinion on it and how do you see the spread/rise of neo-paganism these days?**

I think it is good to have people interested in something other than consumerism and materialism and we are nature ourselves; sometimes as custodians and keepers, sometimes as benders and channels of nature, and sometimes crushed beneath *its* great force....there are many armchair pagans who just use it to identify something with and this is such an ignorant artifice...how many really know the handles of old roots or aerial tops or can discern certain natural signs or omens in the wild? How many are actually *country dwellers* or really do ritual or contribute to their own lore or revere tradition? The old ways are elemental to me and I think we live in a great time in one way, in that we have these archives to learn from...there are unseen things all around us; forces, entities, energies and vibrations...there is a valuable core to all "paganism" that is elemental and found forged by their surrounding nature

**Judging from the small amount of releases of your band, I suspect that you have some time at your disposal to work on your music. So, how does the song-writing take place and do you turn to some older works and reshape or re-arrange these in one way or another?**

The beginning origins of Count Beetle are marked by a slow and moss like growth...The Clairaudience album is the culmination for such a growth and the songs were allowed to grow and create themselves, sometimes writing themselves over many, many years...in this way our music has aged like ghoulish wind from ghastly vineyards and are now overgrown... And now we have all the magic built and saved like old scrolls containing epic spells ...But, now we overflow with songs, material, ideas, lyrics and themes and the terrible barrier comes not from our speed to create but the slow pace to get it release, due to lack of support and funds...Most of the songs start out as an idea, title, or poetry first...as in daydreams and longings...

**In an interview you talked about your aspiration to record your music in a cellar. Did you have had a chance to do so? What are your reasons for attempting so and what do you want to express through this? What does it add to your music and how would you try to record it; just with a microphone placed somewhere?**

The fire on Hunter's Orange was recorded in the furnace room, which is a cellar or basement and the Labrador Retriever that is barking comes in the recording as vibrations from the stone of the walls, so I am not a layman to the matter...It adds to the atmosphere, *by god*, because I captured his essence, or spirit...and he was an esteemed travelling companion of mine, as well, you see...when one can put this into the work, like placing the microphone into an empty hornets nest, or the den of a ground hog or badger, or borrowing the ambiance of a wooden room, then one truly is making quality works as an artisan, I feel...why not use the full cabinet nature and circumstance provides? I suppose I have a strong vision in what can or has to be done with atmosphere...

**Aside from this, do you have a special idea or concept which you would like to see expressed through your art? Where do you like to go with your band?**

There are many things to do...There must be a release of the album, somehow...We already have the material for an album called "Clairvoyance" and there is great material to be expected in this...one day I would like to release some of our older archives-these would make another good and vanished release...I would like to use this Octvember and winter time to record an album involving burrowing mammal themes; a dark, fairy or children's song collection, if you would...I have been working on a song for this called *The secret sleep of groundhogs* and have a strong vision of this... There's a song on the "clairaudience" album that is a memorial for fallen animal companions called "Patch's circle" about a dog that used to curl around and sleep in a magic circle I used to fool around with years ago; I would like to make a video to this, in tribute to the memorial of animal companions I've had before and presently, perhaps...the video would made made from photographs of our personal archives, and there is a great hall for these companions in the form of a plain pet cemetery in our back yard.....Another thing we would like to do is perform and play live...for we need an audience; real or phantasmal...

**I have prepared some tracks for you and would like to have an opinion on these  
(The files were sent to the band without a title and a tag ... to make it a bit mysterious)**

**Arrowwood – In ruin (taken from Hemlock and Spindle Flower)**

<http://www.myspace.com/arrowwood>

1- My sch-noodle got in my lap and stared at me while listening to the first track....then laid down, as always....I am not so much into this; the sound and the song itself...

**Naervaer – Døse Dager (taken from Skiftninger)**

<http://www.myspace.com/terjesagen>

2- I had a similar un-interest in this song, and cannot speak this language so i know i am missing out on something...though this failed to leave me feeling as If i must figure out the meaning

**Lvna In Caelo – Encierro (taken from Aquellos Desgarradores Gritos Llamados Silencio)**

<http://www.myspace.com/lunaincaelo1>

3- Not so interested in this one...the ethereal vocal style is interesting to me, however; though I think it is the effect itself.....the guitar sound I don't like, either

**Green Mistletoe – Evocation to Green Elohim (taken from Forest Dweller)**

<http://www.myspace.com/greenmistletoe>

4- some birds singing....oh how i love bird songs....some frogs? I love all these things, and would prefer something like this over the norm; the chanting, the ambiance....can't say much about this....on the other hand;it would be nice to collect all the birdsongs of different birds and make a collection out of it in a master format or audio compendium



## **Karl Seglem – Rørsle (taken from Femstein)**

<http://www.myspace.com/lydkunst>

5-Interesting.....maybe meditation for some? strange squawking....I have no idea of the mediums/instruments being used, though it has a eastern feel to me...all these songs were better than things we here on the radio here in arkansas, though!

### **How can someone get your releases?**

Only by knocking, presently...and by telling others we are the real deal and making them aware that this music needs to be released...Let them know

### **How can people contact you?**

teddyhorse@yahoo.com

countbeetle@myspace.com

### **Any final words?**

Thank you for these interesting questions and conversation tonight...may we sustain on, into the ether

Count Beetle



## **Review on Count Beetle's music:**

The following segment is on tracks and not on albums!!! The band is still in the process in getting their stuff released and they asked me whether I am interested in writing some lines on their music in my magazine. As Count Beetle is a really obscure band, I was naturally interested in doing so. The order reflects the way I received the files.

Clairaudience album (2 tracks; unreleased)

### **❖ Corn Circles**

This is a really weird track ... 'fucked up' would be an appropriate term. It gives the idea of having been written with the help of some 'thought-enhancing' medications. A narrative voice lays out a tale about chickens, a corn field and soldiers ..., while a simple melody line (guitars and drums) keeps the music going. Imagine a raw sound and two different voices, and then you get a strange piece of music.

### **❖ Faux Squirrels**

The interesting aspect of this track is the reluctance of the band to actually play it. While listening to it someone might get the impression that the band has some difficulties in continuing with the music. Again and again the tempo drops to nearly zero and once the tunes start again, it sounds forced and unnatural. After the half the atmosphere seems to have shifted to some sort of 'accepting the fate' as the song is able to continue in a normal fashion.

❖ pre night wayfarer session 97.mp3

This one was taken from a different recording and comes with a lot of unbalances as well as noisy facets. In case someone has difficulties in enjoying raw music, then this track should be avoided like plague. Nothing polished, nothing friendly to the ear. In style it reminds rather on a metal band doing some jamming in the rehearsal room than anything someone would generally associate with the folk genre.

## ∞ Interview – The Infant T(h)ree ∞

**Well, the opening question is always a bit delicate, but even more so in terms of your band. The band consists of three ... well ... 'aged' persons and I wonder what made you start this band?**

And we wonder too.. Performing from many years without any signal of a retirement. The market always elicited the Youth as the main role to be a musician so you may understand, from the name of our band for example, our goal to be in the same time ironic and hopeful.

**Did you meet at a special location by chance? Did you know each other from various other projects -- what would these be in case such exist?**

The idea behind the project is simple: music and poetry. The aim of the project is also to definite a flux of music from different points ( ambient, electronic, jazz...) with regard to our traditions and cultures. Venice, in this case, is a symbol. A bridge, a door, through centuries of art, music, languages.. So our town is a carpet where unroll ideas, feelings, and also a perfect place to feed our dreams and visions.

**This is not the only peculiarity when it comes to your band, also your name gives rise to some amount of speculation. What is its meaning and what is 'infant' about this project?**

It started as a joke, a counterpoint between the need to be ironic (as we are indeed) and the wish to give a key to our poetics. A little tree that grows, three young hearts, soldiers of poetry.. Infant in this case is not only a little child but it's a honest desire (as humans) to live with joy and great curiosity. Both music and life.

**Moreover, there is also this play of words with three/tree. What does it take to make a tree grow and blossom?**

We loved the idea of a plant to dedicate to, the meaning maybe is about our need of a constant grow, an endless research, the knowledge of the new and beyond.

**What kind of tree would it be? Or should this term be seen rather as a symbol?**

The tree is our music, leaves and flowers are the poems from Mirco Salvadori. His voice is a sort of storyteller, his visions, his passion.. Mirco is a well-know radio dj, a writer, a national music expert, a record producer, an icon. Massimo Berizzi is a talented musician (trumpet, synth, elctronics) and his stature is quickly arising in the international music scene. Gigi Masin (also a former dj) now got his music travelling 'round the World (Bjork, To Rococo Rot, Nujabes..) and has a long experience in the media (radio, television and theatre).

**Well, how does the three play into this? Is this the proper number of influences or band members to help a tree growing or could it be imagined to play music with a larger number of persons?**

It's definitely a tree. We've joked with the number 3 just because we started this project togheter, but we've always stated this is an open project. An orchestra of poetry, who knows...In this way both Massimo Berizzi and Gigi Masin got two longtime musical experiences, and they have projects to release solos and perform as a duo.

**The Laverna netlabel used the term Artmusic for your release as a tag. I cannot say I like this term, because it separates your music from the rest, which would then be non-art music. How do you see the classification or labelling and how would you describe your music in a few words?**

The term 'art music' is above all related to the general concept of music in our country and maybe owing to the Latin origin of our language. There's no separation at all.. To define the Infant T(h)ree as 'art music' is a way to approach our work to the literature, in a territory near but uncomparable to the music scene. When you mix words with music, here, you don't make music. It's something like to be in a theatre, with actors on stage. It's related both to the ancient Greeks' dramas than to the meaning of 'art' that sounds in Italian like 'craftsman' (artigiano).

**Your debut release comes with a lot of sounds and atmospheres. What type of instruments do you use?**

For our first release we used trumpet, piano, synths and electronics. It's our strong wish to develop our sound with acoustic instruments (like the 'oud' or the ' salterio'..) and continue to work on loops and experimental sounds from electronic heritage and field recordings.



**I gave your music another spin no too long ago and I was astounded by the richness in the concept in which it appears. Do you see your first output as some sort of experiments or is this uncertainty in your art something you would like to create also on future outputs?**

Experiments will follow... This first attempt is a sort of beginning, just a note to say we dig in our garden and now have a new plant and we dedicate to make it grow. Also if we have decades of musical experiences it's so exciting to explore new sounds and mixture, trying to elaborate our vision as a trio. Ambient, jazz, electronics are the steps we've walked in this first issue, it's just an imprinting of our intentions. The first release is more likely a photo of our 'momentum'.

**So, while there are a lot of different and maybe even conflicting influences, how does the actual song-writing or recording take place? Is it a group process or clearly divided amongst the band members?**

For the lack of time (jobs, family..) we had to create long distance, but it's easy to do that if you need just some words to fix an idea. We talked about our first demos, but most of the music came naturally, in a funny process of shared inspirations. Also if the music it's apparently a task for Berizzi and Masin, as an aural landscape on Mirco's readings, the final flux is a sort of lake with three tributaries.

**Are you able to transport the atmospheres of the recordings live on stage or do you have to reduce them a bit in complexity?**

The answer is yes also if that is not the real aim of our project, in terms of live performances. Playing live is magic, so it's great to add something in every stage, not only improvisations but new sounds, ideas.. Our music is felt to be 'in movement' and it's the truth.

**Maybe it is possible to talk a bit about the poetry. As I am unable to understand Italian -- I only learned the language of your ancestors (Latin) in school -- I have some difficult in thoroughly understanding your art. Would it be possible to get some idea behind these writings?**

Mirco Salvadori's visions are poems that blossom from his own kaleidoscopic intuition of what is or seems to be Venice, and what may be in a remote future. You can assure that gems of Art like Moebius, Orwell, T.S. Eliot, Pound have to be quoted here, just to give a vague idea of what could be the core of Mirco's writing. But all is chewed and digested to form a personal, rough, undelighted 'fresko' about life. It's funny to say that many had shown in Mirco's poetry a taste of Romanticism; like others contemporary Italian authors maybe there's also the lesson from the Futurism and the feel about a 'cruel, automatic, mechanical world' like something distant, a foreigner to the heart and spirit of the poet, but in the same time the wish for that world to come.

**And why poetry? What is the benefit of using this type of expressing texts? Is it the rhythm, is it the free style in which ideas can be expressed?**

Yes, there's just a little bit of 'free style' in Mirco's readings. No emphasis, no rhetoric, just his way to give his speech, simply and strong and curt also with a deep, sincere, human touch.

**I tried to imagine the idea behind the cover artwork of your release, but have some difficulties in actualising getting it. The naked woman in front of the mirror, the tattoo and this stick or what it is that she holds hidden on her back. Then her look away from the mirror and towards a unknown person or incident ... It is most certainly not easy to put the pieces together here. There is a subliminal authority, maybe even in the realm of sexuality. The idea of dominance and self-assurance.**



She holds a sword.. There's something magnificent in Roman Tcherpak photography, because he can easily wave between different planets while his feet are motionless on the floor. In his photos there's the joy of a child or the enchantment of a lover, the heavy breath of the destiny, the raw testimony of a desert land, a knife in your back while you're smiling. He is a joker in the same time he's crying. A master.

**Your music was released via a netlabel. Why? What is the benefit of spreading music this way? Will there be a chance to see your art also sold in 'regular' CDs?**

It was a choice in terms of productions. To release a cd is

one of our outstanding projects, but we felt it was something to reach later, maybe with a live recordings. In a first sight we decided to do something together, but not to do a cd as a result. The Infant T(h)ree is a project 'in progress'.

### **How do you see the Creative Commons and the ability to download art for free? What are the pros and cons from your perspective?**

On the CCL and copyrights there's a rising debate in our country. There are factions and fractures in the music scene, and this means that pros/cons are still undetermined. The freedom to be an artist and the results in terms of money are the keys of the problem, but it's a cultural gap. The music scene (like others..) is a market, where there's lobbies and transverse interests. To build an off-market (and sometimes an off-off-market..) the CCL is a strong help but it reveals to be a parallel world, also if common or European rules could be a real support. The sensation is about a 'limbo' where wheels are still in motion.

### **Some releases you would recommend someone to give a try.**

Mirco Salvadori: Laverna Net label works, n5md catalogue, Gigi Masin works...your dreams...

Gigi Masin: 'Inside Out' – John Martyn, 'Fluorescences' – Krzysztof Penderecki, 'Solo Piano' – Paul Bley, 'The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady' – Charles Mingus, 'Giant Steps' – John Coltrane.

Massimo Berizzi: new conception of jazz bugge wesseltoft, khmer nils petter molvaer, bitches brew miles davis, chiaroscuro arve henriksen, pendulum eberhard weber, the last dj gigi masin

### **Any final words if you like ...**

Gigi Masin: "You can play a shoestring, if you're sincere" (John Coltrane)

Mirco Salvadori: I practice ... yes, I practice tirelessly, more and more, to overcome the invisible shield that separates the oppressive reality from the creative inspiration, the passive and burdensome commitment from the one that hotly glitters with passion.....'Appi Ljppj Om' by Mirco Salvadori

## **Review Section:**

### **3,14... - Про Малиновую Девочку (About a Crimson Girl)**

(Azerbaijan; Melodic Doom, Death Metal)

1 Track (MP3 – Self-released) - \_ \_ - (10:18)

<http://www.314.az/>; <http://www.myspace.com/314doom>

One aspect has to be emphasized at the beginning of this review: the version made available by the band will appear in a different style on the forthcoming release. This is important to mention because this one lacks any serious type of vocals or lyrics; if you leave the short fragments at the beginning or the end respectively aside. Accordingly, the description 'instrumental' applies to it in some respect. Yet, by listening to it a different impression is created. Rather like an intro or an outro and not like a 'full' composition is piece of doom metal comes along and the listener might wait patiently of the things to come; which never arrive or appear if course.

Про Малиновую Девочку is quite calm and even though the guitars play a dominant role, the texture-like performance of the keyboards in the background cannot be ignored in their impact. They fill the background with some calm tunes and add volume to the sound. Well, basically the track is just one melody, whose arrangements are explored again and again. In some respect everything has a ballad-like somehow 'rockish' touch to it, due to the low amount of elements, the rather 'shallow' complexity as well as the repetitiveness of it all. To listen to this track as a background ambience is quite easy ... a nice and charming tune ... this sums it up quite succinctly.

## Airs – Untitled

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(USA; Experimental, Ambient, Black Metal)

1 Track (MP3 – Self-released) - \_ - \_ (10:09)

<http://www.myspace.com/airsband>; <http://airs.bandcamp.com/>

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Airs is a strange band. Untitled is a strange track/release. The Metal Archives classifies it as 'Black Metal / Shoegaze' (if you do not know how this sounds, then turn to the latest Alcest outputs), but when you listen to this output then those terms seems to fail to really grasp what is going on here. 10:09 is actually rather long, but the sheer complexity of the composition makes it sound short and jolted. First a calm post-rock influenced opening, then a longer metal segment and towards the end a mixture of guitar noises and acoustic/ambient tunes; everything is clearly separated from each other, everything is somehow in a clear order.

It is difficult to listen to it, but the burst of metal and how it develops has a certain fascination. Yet, some amount of disappointment takes over once a glance on the lyrics is shed: the emphasis on an 'emo' theme leaves a slightly bitter taste. If you are able to look beyond this, then this track might be something for you.

## Airs – Joyless

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(USA; Rock, Punk, Heavy/Black Metal)

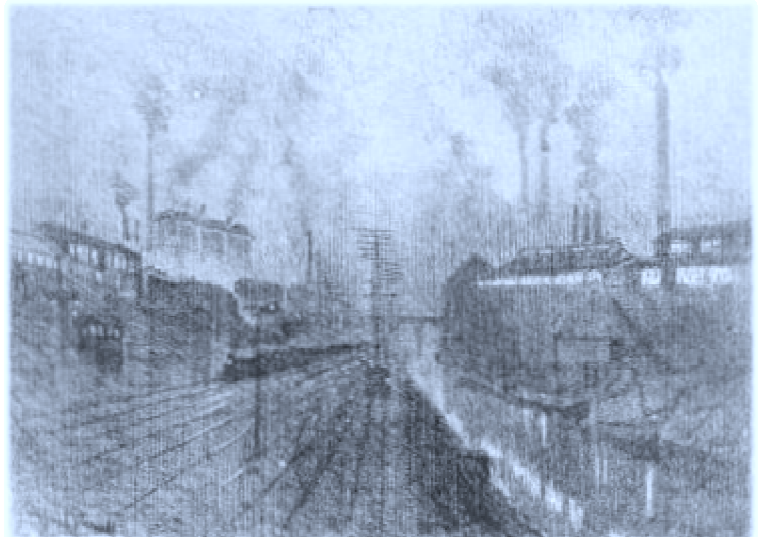
5 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) - \_ - \_ (23:22)

<http://www.myspace.com/airsband>;

<http://airs.bandcamp.com/>

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Yes, this band has found its place on the Metal Archives and this is astounding; especially after one has listened to this release. Just take a spin of the opener 'Joyless': yeah, it is shoegaze, but does it not also wake memories on more recent stuff like Brit-pop/rock? And don't tell me that 'Never Too Late to Hurry Up' – what an awful title by the way -- has something to do with black metal or shoegaze. Rather a metal/punk hybrid is what the listener has to go through... but the style keeps changing and changing. Entitled in German 'Ende der Ewigkeit kommt in der Nacht' (roughly, because the grammar is wrong: the end of eternity approaches in the night) provides some Alcest-influenced piece of music, which in itself is quite atmospheric and has some nice dynamics. 'Ravish' takes the listener back to the opener ... while the last track is nothing but a demo version of Joyless.



Is this what the post-metal movement wants the scene to move towards? This fluffy and nauseating concept, whose arrangements are nothing but annoying to listen to? Joyless ... the name is program, because it is simply a strain to take a spin of this art. This ep sounds shallow, without a clear identity, too polished and way too nice ... No, this is awkward.

## Semilanceata - Dødhelighaz Grafwlijka Mund Ok Dess Vaggande Avgrundsbruus

(Sweden; Acoustic, Ambient, Folk)

6 Tracks (Tape – Self-released) - \_ \_ \_ (24:50)

<http://www.myspace.com/semilanceata47>

Limited ... this idea comes to the mind in a lot of respects while listening to this tape. Limited, because not many copies of it exists; limited, because the tracks follow a peculiar reduced song-writing concept; limited, because not many instruments and elements can be discovered throughout the release. This tape is restricted to a small number of facets and it is up to them to create a dark and somehow ritualistic atmosphere.

Slow in pace, minimal in facets and of a calm sort, Dødhelighaz Grafwlijka Mund Ok Dess Vaggande Avgrundsbruus is something you might want to turn to in hours of exhaustion or relaxation. Sit back, lighten some incense, turn the lights down and let the music fill the air. There is nothing cheerful in the art, but it is also not too depressing either; even though a slight emphasis on this aspect can be discovered.

Something else needs to be mentioned: the compositions lack vocals; I ignore the choral part at the of Gangare sachta fliugha for a moment. No chants, no murmurs ... nothing. In style the concept reminds on October Falls (the non-metal stuff) as well as Of the Wand and the Moon, but again, Semilanceata's art is generally darker and more minimalist, with a different idea behind the compositions and therefore a less orientations on the lyrics. Some of the 'dreamy' facets make an appearance, though. If you know some of the art released by Little Somebody Records – Novemthree or Arrowwood – then you might get an idea of how this Swedish band sounds. Strings of various types



are the main focus on this release and they are accompanied by various sounds – flutes for instance or field recordings or drone textures. In each of the composition the listener has to go through a 'unique' set of ideas and motives. Only one aspect remains as constant: the idea behind the music. How it was interpreted changes throughout the entire album on a large scale. So, the minimalism appears on the micro level, while the macro one reveals a variety of facets.

Dødhelighaz Grafwlijka Mund Ok Dess Vaggande Avgrundsbruus comes surprisingly

well produced and has a nice dark touch, which it is able to create over the entire length of the record. As the days turn longer and days of the ice and snow are approaching slowly but steadily, the performance of Semilanceata foreshadows the shift in a nice way. So, in case you were looking for gloomy music for the shorter days of the year, then this output might be something worth to listen to ...

### Note:

This tape comes with a weird, somehow bubblegum-like odour... well, at least mine has it. Furthermore, a limitation to 47 copies makes it a little bit rare. Both the tape as well as the inlay comes professionally printed. Furthermore, the band is currently planning a somewhat funeral doom inspired piece of art and it is only natural to proceed on this path, because the current music is not far away from this.

## Epsilon Eridani – Tribute to H.P. Lovecraft

(Mexico; Dark Ambient, Drone, Spoken Words)

7 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel: DNA Production) - \_ \_ - (49:40)

[http://www.archive.org/details/dna\\_85\\_epsilon\\_eridani\\_tribute\\_to\\_h\\_p\\_lovecraft](http://www.archive.org/details/dna_85_epsilon_eridani_tribute_to_h_p_lovecraft); <http://www.myspace.com/dnaprod>;

<http://www.myspace.com/epsilon-eridani>

Before writing on the music, some insights on the origin of the band name are provided. Epsilon Eridani is a star, but smaller and less massive than the sun. Only 10.5 light years away it is visible by the naked eye, once you have a chance to see the sky not blurred by the advances of modern civilization. They come especially apparent in large cities or close to industrial facilities.

The name of the band has some relation to Lovecraft of course. His writings generally deal with the vague horror of creatures out in space and their impact on our civilization. Yes, we simply cannot resist the temptation to assume that some living beings outside of our solar system have nothing else to do, then to make **our** life miserable, extricate all our resources and maybe even to create some sort of hybrid race. What would man be without his imagination? God, do you hear me? Helloooooo? ... Silence ... as usual.

Tribute to H.P. Lovecraft provides a mixture of various types of compositions:

- ❖ Instrumental ones (dark ambient and with some references to Ulver)
- ❖ Spoken words performances, with recitations of parts of Lovecraft's works

To figure out which track to a certain category, all you need to do is consult the booklet, whose pages were made available at the Internet Archive in the jpg-Format. **The Cats** and **Where Once Poe Walked** are those who come with lyrics, but the style in which these are expressed there differ. The former comes with a somehow commanding voice, whose expression gives the idea of superiority; while the latter expresses the texts in a whispering kind and with less impact on the music and how it is 'perceived' of course. Aside from this one aspect, also the sound textures vary in terms of the composition. Minimalist dark ambient structures on the one hand and dark ambient with a (vague) melody line on the other. Both work, but I prefer the *The Cats* ... hard to say why, maybe due to its clear structure and the vocals.



What about the rest, then? Ambient, drone and a bit of noise were merged together and provide a variety of sounds as well as styles. While *Zoth-Ommog* reminds on Ulver, the succeeding track shows hints on sound tracks from horror films. Of the other compositions their level of playing with the influences and textures needs to be emphasized. Epsilon Eridani at least attempted to reflect the titles through the music in one way or another. Whether this was well done or not depends on the way the art is perceived as well as the preconceptions a listener might have of 'Lovecraft-inspired music'. This Mexican band did not attempt to create a disturbing kind of music; rather something slightly confusing. Ambient of various types with some noise influences and sounds can be identified. Industrial elements make an appearance as well and the overall perception is that of intense music; now intense and offensive, then rather dark and 'out of the normal way'.

The best aspect of this release is its variety and how weird facets were combined into a framework. Yet even though the album takes the listener not up to the entire potential of this type of art, this tribute to HP Lovecraft is quite interesting to listen to. More weirdness in terms of the vocals would have been neat, but the performance on this album is still as such as to create a certain fascination.

## **Dysphoric**

(Denmark; Black, Death Metal)

<http://www.myspace.com/dysphoricdk>; <http://www.jamendo.com/de/artist/Dysphoric>

From Denmark hails the young band Dysphoric and even though their time in the metal arena has been rather short so far, two releases have been spread already. Both are discussed below and they can either be obtained from the band or downloaded from Jamendo; where the second one has been made available, too.

### **Dysphoric – Mørke (2010)**

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3 Tracks (Tape/ 3" CD / MP3 – Self-released) -\_-\_- (17:30)

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This is would be the first release of the Danish band and it offers a surprisingly great variety of different styles of music. Black and death metal ones are the obvious ones, but also some glimpses into the Gothic as well as depressive metal/rock genres are shed; especially 'In Infinite' applies to the latter type.

#### Mørke

Sludge-inspired music with screams as well as grindcore influenced growls. A dominant lead guitar with some nice riffs to back the performance up. A dark piece of music, but some ideas point in a slightly different direction.

#### Withering

Screams/growl play in the vocals and a style that wakes some memories on Non Serviam. Interesting is the play with the tempo and those keyboard elements, which work as a counterpoint to the tempo.

#### In Infinite

This is a pretty dark and melancholic track. Being hardly metal at all, it comes rather in a somewhat darkwave-inspired depressive fashion. Distorted vocals as well as a somehow minimalist concept can be found further.

It should have been obvious by now that Dysphoric attempted to experiment on their first release a bit. Being the opposite of euphoria, their name points to something unpleasant and hard to bear; maybe this is what they tried to express in a large variety on Mørke. Aggressiveness, melancholy, sadness ... and much more can be found on this release, but there is no coherence. This ep contains some interesting ideas, which merely wait to be more explored and worked on. Where this band might more towards cannot be predicted from this demo, too eclectic is the performance on it.

#### Note:

This release can either be downloaded from Jamendo or bought from the band.



### **Dysphoric – Delusional Haze (2010)**

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5 Tracks (Mp3/CDr – Self-released) -\_-\_- (19:14)

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One difference to the preceding release is obvious from the beginning: there are two short tracks (intro and an interlude) and three 'normal' ones. Another is the overall change in style and a recognizable approach in the song-writing. Even though some glimpses could have been discovered on their first output as well, they played a minor role and were unable to shine through in one way or another. It might be fair to state that Dysphoric has changed tracks towards a slightly new pathway ... and the outcome of this would be?

Glimpses of the melodic death metal were already apparent on Mørke, but the degree in which these would

appear now is a turn that those familiar with the first ep might perceive as a surprise. On the new output Dysphoric took quite a step into this direction, but it is important to note that their art was kept in some way basic – no keyboards and hardly any samples – and midtempo without many bursts or violent blasts. Here more of an old-school interpretation can be found, without the modern frippery. Rather like Non Serviam and earlier Hypocrisy than anything of what roams the scene today. Growls by the vocalist, a bit of chugging by the guitars, some nice harmonies by the acoustic guitar and drums whose play supports the music nicely. The five compositions are catchy in a strange kind of way but come with a well crafted atmosphere. Despite of being a bit calm in style, the band is able to grab the attention of the listener without much difficulty.

Delusional Haze comes as a surprise in a lot of respect: the depressive elements are entirely gone; the genre has taken a shift towards melodic death metal and in terms of the consistency the band took quite a leap forward. So, fans of this particular type of music should really give the second output by the Danish band Dysphoric a try.

#### Note:

This release can either be downloaded from Jamendo or bought from the band, but be quick ... only fifty copies exist of it.

#### To sum the impressions up:

Two very different releases ... really! You might not have anticipated this kind of development from the beginning, but these two musicians from Scandinavia are actually able to write some good music and get it produced in a proper way; especially on the latest output. Tape and 3" CDr versions of Mørke come in a diy style.

#### **Rotorvator – Nero ep (Live in Santarcangelo) (unreleased)**

(Italy; Noise, Black Metal)

4 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) - \_ \_ \_ (17:14)

<http://www.myspace.com/rotorvatorblack>

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You cannot buy this album right now and you will also find no download link for it. The reasons are fairly obvious: it is still unreleased and the music was sent to me by the band with the demand of not sharing these files at all. It should be fairly obvious that I will follow their request.

Some words on the background of the release and why this piece is so short:

The (extreme) music of the Italian band was performed on stage while some 'dancers' – I have seen no video of it so far, so it is a bit of guesswork – do 'something' in the space that is available for them, whatever that might be. So, unlike the normal procedure that some "hot" chicks try to move to the sound of the band and pretend to like it – See: Cradle of Filth for instance –, here we have something that is quite rare in the realm of the metal music; yes, I would associate Rotorvator with this genre.

In case you are familiar with the sounds and atmospheres the Italian band, then you might be curious about how this might look like. This weird mixture of noise and black metal, those extreme screams and throbbing drums as well as disturbing effects form a certain pattern of rhythms and to see them "visualized" in one way or another should be something definitely worth watching as well as waiting for; it is maybe important to emphasize that the basic sketches of this review were written several months ago and there is still no release date in sight.

And believe me ... the music is intense. It is sinister and



disturbing; with the exception of the last track maybe, which is rather depressing due to its minimalism. The music does not follow a distinct path on this ep and switched between different types of atmospheres. So, while the opener is the typical Rotorvator stuff, with each additional track a progression into much calmer regions can be discovered. Experimental and noisy black metal with a lot of layers and electronic facets would sum the impressions up. The style is more structured and focussed than the works of Gnaw Their Tongues for instance and hardly as offensive as the performance of a lot of other noisy black metal bands these days. Even though the compositions themselves have little in common, they were nevertheless created in such a way as to flow into each other.

How this plays out on stage by the theatre dance group? I have no freaking idea, but it is a nice idea nonetheless. At the moment there only the MP3 files are available for this review ...

To be continued ... maybe ... someday

### **Foreskin - Just a Fucking Preview!**

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(Pakistan; Thrash Metal/Crossover)

3 Tracks (CDr – Self-released) - \_ \_ - (3:18)

<http://www.myspace.com/foreskinpakistan>

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Yeah ... it is short ... it is sick ... it is from Pakistan ... nasty thrashy metal music with an excessive amount of rawness.

Yeah ...

Yeah ... Just a fucking short review ...

Yeah ...

### **Foreskin – Bombs Away!**

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(Pakistan; Thrash Metal/Crossover)

3 Tracks (CDr – Self-released) - \_ \_ - (2:49)

<http://www.myspace.com/foreskinpakistan>

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Urgh ... another short one ... and an even more sickish one ... now with grindcore and death metal influences ... but still raw ... Urgh

This is sick ... urgh

Words away ...

#### Note:

Both releases are available from the band or download them; you can even buy one of them... urgh ... yeah ...

## Eagle Chalice

(USA; Experimental)

<http://www.myspace.com/eaglechalice>; <http://www.hiddenfortresstapes.blogspot.com/>

I am not an 'anachrophobe', no I am definitely not! Those tapes are to me sort of an unnecessary inconvenience, a relic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and something that is not able to stand up to the change of tides and time. They lose in quality every time you play them; you have to turn them around every now and then and do not forget about the problem of finding the proper second of segment on it, the one you love and hold dear. No, I am not an anachrophobe, I am merely someone who holds his MP3/Ogg/FLAC collection dear.

Well, this term jumped at me while glancing over the blog entries of the American band Eagle Chalice, of whom I was able to acquire their two tapes. Both of them are discussed below:

## Underwater Panther Party

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6 Tracks (Tape – Hidden Fortress Tapes) -\_-\_- (20:09)

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The first release of the American band Eagle Chalice comes with a surprising amount of facets and styles. As I do not have any track titles at hand, I am merely able to point to the compositions through numbers. So, in case you obtain a copy this tape, then you should take notes on the breaks in the flow of the music, because you might not be able to follow me.

Important to emphasize is the short length of some of the compositions: four times less than three minutes; at least according to the way I ripped it. With one of these the tape would actually opens and the listener is introduced into a chilling ambient/drone atmosphere which comes with some effects in the background that remind on rain drops. Yet, this warm and nice type of music is not preserved, as the succeeding composition – or are these actually two? ... ah, never mind – comes with some weird oscillating noise distortions. The confusion is complete as once again a rather calm motive is introduced, which in style is not too far from what the band used for opening this tape. Than another but longer disruption ... and then more of the distinct motives that was played earlier. The closing two tracks are a bit freer in the concept and only recite earlier ideas in some respect. No vocals can be found in any of the tracks and the instruments seem to have a place in the electronic corner. In case a drumbeat appears, then it is the usual sterile type and the rest of the music consists of a to and fro of various types of layers of keyboards/synthesizers. Throw a bit of noise in as well and you get the idea what this tape is all about.

Eagle Chalice seem to be uncertain about what to do or which path to follow. Whether it is supposed to be some sort of beat-driven good-feeling music or some 'I am on an acid trip thing' remains hidden, this band thought it would be best to offer both. Imagine Vangelis with some grindcore blasts thrown in now and then; no, not for real ... just to give you an idea on how to feels listing to such a type of music ... gosh. The best moments are those with some clear structure and a slight fluffy beat in the background ... but maybe I am simply not in the mood for too much experimental stuff.



## Let's Float

2 Sides (Tape – Hidden Fortress Tapes) -\_-\_- (19:36)

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I was too lazy to find out where one track or segment ended and another one began, so I just ripped this thing via Audacity and took one side as one track. It does not make it easier to describe the music, but actually I do not really care. Again, no track list would give an indication on how many tracks would appear on this tape ...

Eagle Chalice uses the following description:

Killer summer synth jamz from the state where it's always summer.

(Source: <http://www.myspace.com/eaglechalice/blog>)

Reminds me on the title of a Voivod track: Planet Hell. Also Brontitall, Esflovian and Han Wavel from the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe come to mind. It sounds like torment ... because what could you possibly expect from such a place? Getting drunk all day long also gets tiring soon and the energy you need to run all your modern conveniences surely requires a nuclear power plant nearby.

Well ... once the Underground Panther Party is over the band Eagle Chalice wants you to 'float'; which sounds like a paraphrasing of an order to getting high. Maybe it helps to get over the hangover or any other lasting impact of this strange kind of event. Anyway, compared with release numero uno, the second one has a nice and charming touch, which might be due to the focus on distinct rhythm patterns; those had a smaller impact on UPP. The compositions on Let's Float have some nice calm beats in the background and it is their part that takes the listener by the hand and guides this person through the music; the first output lacked it and was therefore harder to digest.

Aside from this, a clear continuation in style and concept can be discovered, with the exception of disturbing interludes or the sort. Calm and steady warm and chilling tunes flow out of the speakers and create the impression of relaxation as well as peacefulness. It is easy to imagine one sitting on the porch in some sort of sunlounger and enjoying the tunes. Due to their repetitive character, their well crafted multiple layers of sounds and noises – crackling and the sort – it is not difficult to follow the motives and arrangements. It should be noted that the second side of this tape – figure out which side is which by yourself – is more accessible than the first and more experimental one. Calm idm and synth-loaded music with inoffensive beats make up the art of Eagle Chalice and you should get these tapes now, while they are still available (check the blog of the label for more information on this); if you wait until the next summer – speaking from the perspective of someone who is currently tormented by autumnal weather cycles again – then these two tapes might be not available anymore.

### Final note:

Both tapes come with a weird design and have no tracklists printed anywhere. So, even though the MySpace site offers some insights on how parts of the music were 'labeled', the actual releases lack this type of information and the reviews have also no references whatsoever.

## Ouroboros – Vanitas

(Italy; Experimental, Ambient, Industrial, Noise)

7 Tracks (CDr – Prime Unit Records) -\_-\_- (46:14)

<http://www.myspace.com/primeunit>; <http://www.myspace.com/marcogrosso>

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Vanitas is a compilation if you like and it consists of two cover versions:

1. Depeche Mode's Enjoy the Silence
2. Black Sabbath's Black Sabbath

Furthermore, according to Discogs the tracks on this album are basically *outtakes from "Lux Arcana" and "Nigredo" sessions* as well as some remixes of older recordings.

Depeche Mode's Enjoy the Silence



Those who have followed my reviews over the years might have noticed a piece on a cover version performed by the British band Sabazius. It was Rolling Stones' Sympathy for the Devil that they worked on and changed to quite a considerable amount; the length had been stretched to over twenty-five minutes! Ouroboros did not take it to such extreme, but they nevertheless manage to add a certain amount of identity to their way of interpreting the original. Depending on which version it is referred to, the one on Vantias is at least double the length and has generally little in common with the original. The 'beats' were removed, guitars are non-existent and of the nice cheerful atmosphere nothing is left. A dark and very intense one is what dominates the cover version and especially the dense and slightly noisy texture in the background adds a frightful undertone to it all. When it comes to the vocals, the Italian band also changed the style and instead of the clean way of singing the lyrics, some operatic and falsetto-dominated (?) voice expresses the texts throughout the track. In case you are familiar with the original and appreciate it very much, then this version will hardly suffice your interest and fascination. Maybe it would go too far, but there hangs the idea of mocking the positive vibe of Depeche Mode's composition in the air; an attempt to make this person appreciate the silence once the track is over and the 'torment' is gone by. Ouroboros' interpretation is not bad ... it is just so weird

and outré that it is a bit hard to endure at times.

#### Black Sabbath's Black Sabbath

Also in this cover version an increase in length can be identified, yet compared with the other tracks discussed above, here everything was kept rather controlled; around on minute more compared to Black Sabbath's version. Yet one similarity persists: the reluctance to stick to the original elements and to exchange these into some ambient-dominated atmosphere. No drums, no guitars and also no bass ... just some drone/ambient textures with some intelligible murmuring vocals on top of it. Occasionally, a sample or a noise effect makes an appearance – like a church bell or some strange thundering beat – but these are rather the exception than the rule. Even less than the interpretation of Depeche Mode's composition this one is identifiable as the original, because the gap between these is simply immense. The main point of criticism is the lack of real identity, because the cover version sounds interchangeable and could also be used for a different compositions or concept. To take the interpretation to the extreme is certainly interesting, but at least some hints on the original should be provided. Ouroboros seem to have gone a bit too far with this one.

What about the rest, then? Well, even though (dark) ambient dominates this release; the way it is presented is interesting nonetheless. Sometimes a bit of a ritualistic touch is added to it through a distinct type of vocals or better said recitation of the lyrics; electronic beats give the music some kind of rhythmic feeling and industrial/noisy facets increase the tension and work as a counterpoint to the overall minimalist concept of the music. Male as well s female voices make an appearance on this recording, but in terms of their impact the focus lies undoubtedly on the latter of these and this has by no means solely to do with the Depeche Mode cover. Also on other tracks they were used and it actually turns out to work pretty nice.

Two more releases wait to be written on and it is a difficult task to get these reviews done. Ouroboros seems to be reluctant to follow a simple and easy way of composing or creating art. Each of these albums contains a variety of sounds and influences, concepts and approaches and these range from dark and minimalist ambient ones over industrial and even to strange operatic experiments. To nail the band to something definite seems like a vain effort. The reasons for choosing Vanitas were simple: the interpretation performed on this recording was actually something of a starting point to explore the art and a fixed spot from which the rest of it could be examined. Patience is what seems to be a fundamental requirement when it comes to Ouroboros; patience and a wide spectrum of musical preferences.

## Misogi - Tofotukami Wemitamafe

(Japan; Progressive Black Metal)

9 Tracks (CD – Sabbathid Records) - \_ \_ - (48:19)

<http://www.myspace.com/misogijp>; <http://members3.jcom.home.ne.jp/oriental-tiger/>

Black metal is a peculiar genre. Once you search for releases per year per genre in the Metal Archives database, death as well as black metal are those who tend to have the largest amount of these in the last decade. So, while there are a lot of demos and albums out there, the overall quality and the limitation in the concepts seem to be as such as to give the impression of a music that is basically circling around itself, an endless incestuous orgy with no hope of a way out. Yet, with the spread of this extreme kind of music to non-western spheres and with bands whose oeuvre is not limited by the standard (trve) elements, a new vibe has begun to enter the scene. Bands from Arab and/or Islamic countries use instrumentations of their own cultural backgrounds and combine these with the dark art of the black metal genre. The outcome is quite fascinating ... and even more so what the Japanese band Misogi has crafted on Tofotukami Wemitamafe.

Even though some of the compositions wake memories on Darkthrone's raw releases – Panzerfaust and Transilvanian Hunger – others take a different turn. Fast and thrash-influenced riff motives appear, while a Kagula flute and keyboards – note: not just simple textures but the band tried to resemble traditional instruments through this – were used to create an Eastern-influenced atmosphere; the tracks Idumo and Aidu even have citations of traditional music (source: booklet). It might be a bit farfetched, but imagine Ulver's Bergtatt with an Asian folk music spin and you get an idea on how Tofotukami Wemitamafe sounds. As the Japanese stuck to fast lead-guitar motives and a greater variety of tempos and arrangements the experience is a different one of course. This release is wilder but has some of the same spirit that the Norwegians were able to create back then. Actually, this is only natural as the level of professionalism and quality of black metal has increased since; in parts at least.

Misogi's art is quite complex and this makes it difficult to describe the performance but on the other side it is interesting to listen to. The band does rarely leave the listener with some moments to catch breathe and even the traditional instruments were not played in a slow manner. Slower interludes and passages exist but their impact is basically negligible and it is this 'Dark Funeral' inspired art that takes the cake here. In terms of the concept the Japanese have put more emphasis on the strings and how they shape the music. The drums for instance have no other function than to lay the basis for the music and were therefore kept in the background; while the guitars (also the bass) are more dominant. These aspects alone make up a very interesting release but it should further be mentioned that Misogi song-writing leaves the listener with little to desire. Hardly any monotonous passages, hardly any kind of plain or tiring moments ... the atmosphere and the motives merge together neatly. Further, the booklet has all lyrics printed, so it is possible to read them and get a glimpse of what this band from Japan 'sings' about; some passages are not in English though, but the majority of them are.



This release leaves a very positive impression. Unlike a lot of black metal bands these days, a more daring approach was used when composing the music for this release. Even though it would be neat to hear more influences from traditional Japanese music as well as seeing/hearing the concept drift off into a little bit more weird/wild realms, the debut album of Misogi is nevertheless something fans of modern and progressive black metal should definitely give a try. The production is really good and the quality never drops just a bit over the whole course of the recording. Nevertheless, the complexity of this recording demand from the listener to take a good amount of time to appreciate what is going on here; a spin or two will not suffice. Really recommended.

## Despot - Cold Deliverance

(Brazil; Black Metal)

5 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) - \_ \_ \_ (26:00)

<http://www.myspace.com/thedespotband>; <http://www.despot.com.br/>

Cold Deliverance would be the third release of the Brazilian band Despot and it would be the second one in 2010. Furthermore, as the band is only active since 2008 it has not only spread a considerable amount of demos so far, also the overall performance is by no means bad. Those five tracks on this latest output come with a variety of sounds and influences: death, (symphonic) black and thrash metal make an appearance. What might astound is the overall density of the compositions. Fast lead-guitars (Rejoice in Isolation) meet some interesting dynamics (The Bastard Hive has some riff-chugging parts) for instance and also the drums and keyboards are able to support the music now and then. Old Satyricon (and maybe even a bit of Dimmu Borgir) meets (modern?) Dark Funeral would give an indication on what to expect on this release. It is hardly possible for the listener to catch some breath ... because there is an endless stream of riffs and motives pouring out of the speakers.

Not surprisingly this comes at a cost. Occasionally, the music sounds overloaded and chaotic; especially the keyboards appear displaced at times. There is simply too much going on and it impossible to grasp every tiny bit of it.

Even though the band refers to rather established and conservative bands on their homepage, the music on this demo sounds rather modern; something quite apparent when taking the powerful production into account. Cold Deliverance – no this title is misleading – is quite listenable and can be enjoyed, but the lack of a clear identity as well as the slightly chaotic approach, prevent it from being enjoyed over a longer period of time.



## Earth Sheds Ghostly Shadows - Demo 2010

(USA; Death Metal)

5 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released / Netlabel – Torn Flesh Records) - \_ \_ \_ (13:03)

[www.myspace.com/earthshedsghostlyshadows](http://www.myspace.com/earthshedsghostlyshadows);

[www.myspace.com/tornfleshrecords](http://www.myspace.com/tornfleshrecords); <http://www.archive.org/details/TFR157-EarthShedsGhostlyShadows-Demo2010>

The cover of this release looks strangely familiar. When I am not entirely mistaken it was taken from the animated movie *The Iron Giant*. In terms of the music Earth Sheds Ghostly Shadows play death metal but instrumental one. To be frank, this 'term' does not entirely apply if you interpret it in its core meaning, because the Americans used samples from various films for their art; hence some spoken passages make an appearance. Sadly or luckily these were not taken from some b-horror movie or of any other extreme and disgusting type; the strange stuff goregrind band tend to dig out in the tons. Here, some surprisingly calm, or shall I say 'inoffensive', types were used and even though some hints on the grindcore scene are presented in the music, this additional facet does not follow.

Death metal ... yes, such is presented here, but you can feel that something is missing. Maybe it is due to the rare type in which music was crafted -- without lyrics -- that leaves this strange impression, maybe it the calmness of the art, but there are facets on this demo that might give the listener a hard time. As I have written on other instrumental arts in the past, also this one sounds like it could burst any minute and that the listener is simply waiting for 'it' to come; yet such never really happens. Well crafted riffs pass by but then ... nothing; with these rather 'normal' samples it is even stranger to listen to. Progressive or technical death metal might work without vocals, but most certainly not the type presented on this demo. Move along ... nothing to see here.

## Aairria - Chamber of Winds

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(Poland; Ambient)

1 Track (MP3 – Netlabel: Rain Netlabel) - \_ \_ \_ (73:20)

<http://www.archive.org/details/rain040>; <http://rainnetlabel.blogspot.com>; <https://aairriamusic.wordpress.com/>

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It is or better said it was Halloween. As the release date of this magazine does not correspond with this particular date, some might see the review of this release a little bit late. Anyway, Chamber of Winds would be the latest release of this band and of a kind that provides a lot material for discussion. The title of the track would be 'Singing Ghosts' and as such the question arises, whether the performance by the Polish artist might correlate with the anticipation of the curious listener.

Well, compared with what is generally assumed to be 'ghostly', Aairria – a ruined palindrome, I say – composed music of such a chaotic mess that any clearly distinguishable message sound or noise remains hidden. The general idea of an 'Otherworld', whose basic foundations are somehow like ours and in which the 'deceased' are able to communicate, despite their ethereal (vaporous?) nature, with each other; with the obvious result that everyone has to hear about and deal again with everything one has done in one's physical existence; if this is it not a picture of hell at its purest, then I'll be damned. Anyway, Singing Ghosts gives the idea of a strange to and fro as well as up and down of distorted noises, which are accompanied by dronish textures. An endless intelligible murmuring, a torment of hollow singings, whose main purpose seems to be their pure existence than anything else. There is nothing pleasing to ear in this track, there is nothing nice and friendly, but on the other side also nothing too dark or disturbing. Just layers upon layers of various types of voices, whose messages are hidden from our understanding ... but maybe they will reveal themselves once we have entered this obscure and mysterious 'second world'; well, if you believe in such nonsense.

Why is has this mug just begun floating in the air by the way???

Index pictures:

[http://www.archive.org/details/Kingston\\_Exiled\\_for\\_the\\_Faith](http://www.archive.org/details/Kingston_Exiled_for_the_Faith)

<http://www.archive.org/details/adventureinphoto00thaniala>

<http://www.archive.org/details/englishpictures00mann>

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<http://www.archive.org/details/greekpicturesdra00maha>

<http://www.archive.org/details/josephpennellspi00pennuoft>

<http://www.archive.org/details/italianpicturesd00mann>

## Outlook

Once I have the time to finish them: essays

More interviews per edition

Several longer reviews

Pictures from old magazines